

Cumberland County Hospital
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
Cumberland Drive (County Road 613)
Bridgeton Vicinity
Cumberland County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1151

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CUMBERLAND COUNTY HOSPITAL

HABS No. NJ-1151

Location: Cumberland Drive (County Road 613), Bridgeton Vicinity, Cumberland County, New Jersey

Significance: This sprawling, multi-part Palladian structure exemplifies the application of high-style design motifs to institutional-public buildings; the formal design is surely the result of proximity to Philadelphia and its architecture, but in scale and execution this structure is architecturally outstanding.

Historical Information: Erected in 1899. No original plans or drawings have been located. The physically sound building had been unoccupied for several years (as of 1990), with the first-floor windows boarded up. Because of its location across from another county facility, on a large tract of county-owned property, the structure suffered little or no vandalism damage until it burned down in 1992.

Architectural Information:

- A. General Statement: This Palladian brick structure is organized as a quasi-nine-part linear plan with the three-story center block the largest and most formal; lateral two-story arms link it to two more two-story blocks on each side. In form, materials, and decoration it reflects a descending hierarchy of high-style design elements.
- B. Description of Exterior:
 - 1. Overall dimensions: Approximately forty-four bays long: main block (5), lateral arm/hyphen (3), canted-bay block (11), arm/hyphen (3), wing/block (2), arm (4).
 - 2. Foundation/walls: The foundation is rusticated masonry; the walls are load-bearing brick. The majority of the facades are articulated as three parts: A rusticated coursed-stone foundation rises up as a watertable with molded-brick edging that is deeper at one end (because the building is slightly banked), and two expanses of brick divided between the first and second floors by a brick beltcourse. The front facade of the main block, first floor, is rusticated brick. The most formal decoration is found on the projecting, full-height, center-front gable entry. A raking cornice with modillions dominates the center three bays of the five-bay block, with brick pilasters topped by Ionic capitals demarking the division between the bays.
 - 3. Porches: There is a raised, one-story, hipped-roof porch supported by paired Tuscan columns and pilasters across the center three bays of the front facade, main block; this is highlighted by a large, decorative broken pediment. There are an unknown number of inset, second-floor porches on the wing facades.
 - 4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The primary front door is double and glazed; door frames are wood painted white. Narrow panel doors are found on the rear facade of the hyphens, set in wood frames with stone keystone lintels. It is not known how many other doors existed.

- b. Windows: A modified Palladian window is on the front facade, main block, third floor, set in a blind arch. This motif is repeated on the front facade of the secondary blocks, as well, though not as a proper Palladian type. Decorative arched windows are on the second floor of the hyphens/arms, behind ballustraded sills, and on side facades of the main block. The abundant regular fenestration is mostly six-over-six-light double-hung sash; there are also eight-over-eight-light, nine-over-nine-light, and twelve-over-twelve-light double-hung sash. They appear alone, or banked in groups of two or three.

All windows are wood with wood frames, stone sills and keystone lintels.

At least one window opening on the second floor, rear, was fitted with a large tubular metal chute that leads to the ground; this was used to expel patients from the building and to safety in case of fire.

5. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The complex roof treatment helps establish the building's hierarchies: The center block is a flat-topped hip, and the outlying roofs are cross-hipped and hipped with cross gables. The covering is asphalt shingle.
- b. Cornice: Continuous wood cornice, with modillions on the main block; plain on other primary facades and all rear facades.
- c. Dormers, towers: Atop the center block is a domed wood belvedere that is echoed laterally by two domed cupolas on each hyphen/arm where they intersect with the cross wings.

- C. Description of Interior: The interior was inaccessible, but through the front door it was possible to see that the foyer is arranged as a rotunda that may have been a double-height space. The first floor featured a polygonal loggia with deep, dentilled architrave that was supported by Tuscan and square columns; a balcony surrounded the second-floor. A double stairway, on axis with the front door, leads up both walls to the second floor.

Sources: Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991.

Project Information: The project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian. The project was completed during summer 1992. The project historian was Kimberly R. Sebold (University of Delaware). The photography was produced by David Ames, University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering.